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ABSTRACT

This document on teaching about the effects of the world on everyday lives argues that this knowledge does not come naturally because of the traditions in teaching and research in international relations. This field of study traditionally has focused on the relations between territorial states in the interstate system, and on the foreign policies of these states. Emphasis has focused primarily on conflicts and wars among the big powers, and on their efforts to control part or all of the interstate system. While the powerful states have had a tremendous impact on the lives of people throughout the world, teaching and research traditions tend to incapacitate most people for effective participation in the development of the foreign policies of their state. Foreign policy making is taught as an observer sport. As a result, individuals only begin to comprehend how they are directly involved in decisions to wage war or overturn regimes. Many people in local communities do perceive their relationships with the world and are able to cope effectively. Two examples are: (1) people in business who manage the headquarters of transnational corporations and their branches located in towns; and (2) those who "think globally and act locally," groups like Amnesty International and those that urge global education efforts. These people have overcome the disabilities of state centered international education and perceive ways in which they as individuals, and their local communities, are involved in global issues. Teachers must acquire the capacity to perceive world relations in their daily life. (DK)

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Perceiving, Understanding and Coping with the World Relations of Everyday Life

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BRINGING THE WORLD HOME: EDUCATING AMERICANS IN A NEW WORLD COMMUNITY

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Perceiving, Understanding and Coping with the World Relations of Everyday Life*

We have gathered here in Indianapolis to "Bring the World Home," and to "Educate Americans in a New Global Community." These are challenging and very worthwhile themes behind which we can all readily unite. Indeed, they have been successful in attracting all of us here this morning. Nevertheless, you will not be surprised if a professor feels obligated to analyze these phrases in search of meaning beyond their rallying cry for this assembly. But my analysis will be more than a pedantic ritual because the essential meaning of these phrases is intertwined with the major issues in my professional life over the past two decades.

Why do we think that we should "Bring the World Home?" Is not the home of each of us already intertwined with the whole world--from basement to attic? I refer, of course, to the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the furniture on which we sit and sleep, the electronic devices that are spread throughout our home, the car that we drive to and from our home and the fuel that propels it. Furthermore, if we include our local community in our notion of home, we all would immediately think of the flow of refugees and other immigrants into our community; the continuing relations of inhabitants of this country of immigrants with their places of origin; the worldwide investments of our local banks; the global involvements of our colleges and universities; the foreign-trained doctors and nurses in our local public health facilities; the distant networks to which our local religious communities are connected; the cemeteries in many countries

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where families kneel to honor those who fell in foreign wars, and our local involvement in worldwide systems for coping with AIDs, drugs, and pollution.

Obviously, we need not bring the world home, it is already here, all around us, on us, and inside us. Thus, by "bringing the world home" we must essentially mean perceiving the world relations of daily life. And, it would seem to necessarily follow, that we would also wish to understand and to cope with these usually unavoidable aspects of our daily life.

What then do we mean by the second phrase in our conference title--"educating Americans in a new global community?" It would seem that the authors of this phrase were using the term community in the sense of people being connected to each other and in some ways sharing a common fate. Of course these are the things that we have already been describing. But are these worldwide links really new? Of course, we all know that new technologies for transportation and communication, particularly the jet engine and communications satellites, now link more places in the world more directly and much faster. But many aspects of this kind of global community are not new. After all, people have disseminated fashion, music, religious beliefs, philosophies, disease, inventions, plants and seeds over long distances for centuries. We are indebted to world historian, William McNeill, for describing in such a fascinating way the "first closure of ecumene." By this he means the first period, i.e., around 200 AD, in which there was a somewhat continuous flow of these aspects of culture across the Eurasian landmass, from the Roman Empire on the Atlantic, to the Han Empire on the Pacific. Says McNeill: "I deplore the effort to dissociate humanity's deeper past from the contemporary encounter with the world." (McNeill, 1963, 5) This ecumene then became ever more global as Europeans brought the Americas, Africa beyond the Mediterranean and Asia into the ecumene.

These thoughts about "bringing the world home" and "a new global community" lead to a very challenging question which must be confronted by all global educators. Why must we struggle so hard to enable people--ourselves as well as others--to perceive the world relations of everyday life? Why have we not, from early childhood, been enabled to perceive what is all around us, on us and even in us? At the same time, why do we often tend to view interdependence as something that happened in the last several decades--thereby ignoring earlier dramatic evidence of interdependence--two world wars; interventions in the Caribbean, Central America, the Philippines and China; the impact of global depression; and the role of imported labor in our economy--African, Asian, Latin American and European--from the early days of the republic?

For the most part, the answers to these questions are to be found in traditions in a field of teaching and research which we call <u>international relations</u>. This field of study has traditionally focused on the relations between territorial states in the inter-state system, and on the foreign policies of these states. These states are portrayed on the world map by brightly colored areas defined by clear black lines, each with a star, signifying the place where the government for that state resides. For the most part international relations teaching and research has tended to focus on relations between the big and powerful states. Emphasis in this teaching and research has focused primarily on conflicts and wars among these big powers, and on their efforts to control part or all of the inter-state system.

The perspective of mainstream international relations teaching and research, of course, focuses on one very significant aspect of world relations. The powerful states have had a tremendous impact on the lives of people throughout the world. On the other hand, teaching and research traditions tend

to incapacitate most people for effective participation in the development of the foreign policies of their state. The places where the stars are located, and the institutions they represent, are portrayed as distant and unconnected from the everyday lives of most people. Thus, to a considerable degree foreign policy making is taught as an "observer sport." We observe, and may discuss, the differing opinions of those people at the stars who have special competence for determining something called the "national interest." But only very slowly do we eventually begin to comprehend how we are directly involved in decisions to wage war in Vietnam and Korea; to overturn regimes in Iran, Guatemala or Chile; or to arm one side against another in El Salvador or Angola. Indeed, the traditions for elite control of foreign policy is even so strong that our elected representatives often feel that they must defer to these experts.

It would be difficult to overestimate the blinding intellectual power of the common wall map, with its clearly demarked colored blotches and their stars, reinforced by mainstream international relations teaching. Very troublesome is that it tends to convey a static and enduring quality to world relations, whereas they are usually dynamic and changing. As you all know, one problem is that the wall map, highlighting the some 185 states that have been admitted into an exclusive club by other states, fails to recognize most of the nations and ethnic groups with which the people of the world identify. Failure to take these into account made us unprepared for three fundamental transformations in the state system in this century--that following World War I, the breakup of the overseas European empires and the recent transformations in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Inevitably there will be others. We will probably be surprised again, as long as we continue to misuse the term "nation-state." Most states are multi-nation states, as were the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Many nations are

multi-state, as with the Kurds, Armenians and many others. Indeed there are only a handful of nation-states, although leaders of many other states would have us believe that they are nation-states.

Perhaps even more directly related to the "bring the world home" theme of this conference is the way in which mainstream teaching and research in international relations has emphasized the territorial, in contrast with the transterritorial, character of human life and consequent world relations. By focusing on relations between states (i.e., their governments), this approach asserts that territorial states are the basic foundations for human life on the planet. Perhaps eventually it is recognized the people outside these governments have relations across state boundaries, but only if these activities tend to have significant impact on relations between governments of states. But these so-called "relations between peoples" tend to be viewed as secondary or peripheral.

Fundamental to our "bring the world home" theme is the fact that international relations teaching and research fails to adequately recognize the restless, inquisitive, migratory nature of humanity--except as reflected in the policies of states. Not adequately portrayed is the fact that territorial states are inevitably imposed on a field of human connections that transcend the new boundaries. Many of these relationships continue, often involving struggles with new territorial authorities. Thus, human life has always been a dialogue between two basic human tendencies. The one is to explore, migrate, trade, exchange ideas and dominate as far as technology for travel and communication will permit. The other has been to gather together in territorial polities for purposes of identity and security; and sometimes so that small cliques can establish territorial polities in order to control a specific territory and its inhabitants.

Both tendencies are of basic importance most of the time, with one or the other more important in specific circumstances. But we must struggle "to bring the world home" because territorial biased research and teaching has stunted our capacity to perceive, understand and cope with the realities of human connectedness all around us. In essence we are struggling to respond to this admonition of anthropologist Eric Wolf: "the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes [...] inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and fail to reassemble it falsify reality. Concepts like 'nation,' 'society,' and 'culture' name bits and threaten to turn names into things." (Wolf, 1982, 3)

Obviously, we have difficulty in "bringing the world home" because mainstream international relations teaching and research does not provide the knowledge required. Rather, this enterprise has served the knowledge needs of people working at the stars on the map. Their activities and functions are the focus of this teaching and research. When efforts are made to make international relations and foreign policy research "policy relevant," relevance is defined as questions raised by these foreign policy elites. This negligence in serving local needs has obviously been very costly to many local communities, as reflected by empty factories and unemployment lines in old industrial towns in the rust belt that were once the sites of steel, automobile and tire production. These enterprises once were successful in a world market but failed to understand that continued success would require creative response to local impacts of a changing world economy.

On the other hand, there are many people in our local communities who do perceive their relationships with the world and are able to effectively cope. I will briefly discuss two examples. First, people in business who manage the

headquarters of transnational corporations and their branches, located in our cities, towns and even rural areas. Also included are local manufacturers who market worldwide, wholesale and retail outlets who purchase worldwide and banks who finance trade and invest worldwide. And then there are local headquarters and branches of worldwide advertising, accounting, fast food, rental car and hotel chains. We pass the buildings of these enterprises everyday, purchase their products and services, educate students who will work for them, and socialize with their personnel in PTA, religious organizations and neighborhoods. Obviously, they offer vivid and tangible resources for those of us who wish to "bring the world home".

Occasionally our newspapers and broadcast media report on state trade missions of U.S. states to other countries, and reciprocal missions to our city and state. Rarely do they report on the permanent missions that most state development offices have in a number of other countries, seeking trade and investment. The competence of these activities, and their consequences, can have a fundamental impact on the local economy, and consequently on local quality of life. What kind of trade? What will the impact of foreign-owned factories be on environment, on employment opportunities and on the quality of available jobs? Quite likely the children of foreign managers will attend our schools. Will we be prepared to teach them, and even to use them and their parents as resources for global education? Will our local students see advantages to be gained from incorporating them into school life? Here too are resources for "bringing the world home." But they also raise significant policy questions for city and state government, community organizations and schools.

A second example of people who perceive, understand and are struggling to cope with the world relations of everyday life are those who often say that they

are "thinking globally and acting locally." These people are members of a diversity of kind of voluntary organizations who are attempting to cope with global issues in their own local community. They are sources of inspiration for all of us in that they have acquired the capacity to perceive the local arenas of global issues. Overcoming the incapacitating limitations of their international education they understand that it is in the nature of a global issue that manifestations of that issue are to be found everywhere. These people also seem to understand that control by elites at the stars is only possible because most people affected have deferred to the "star people."

No doubt many in this room have participated in, or been members of these groups. They include Amnesty International in which local chapters work for the release of distant prisoners of conscience. Also included are those who helped to bring down Apartheid in South Africa through achieving disinvestment in South Africa by local banks, corporations, universities and local government pension funds. Another example is the INFACT campaign against infant formula marketing practices in the Third World. This grassroots campaign led to the creation of standards for the marketing of infant formula by the World Health Organization based in Geneva. Still another example are local efforts to have cities and towns declared Nuclear Free Zones and campaigns for converting local industry to peaceful purposes. A final example is global education efforts in local communities which attempt to illuminate the ways in which local economic ties to Third World communities are integral parts of a global economy in which the gap between the rich and the poor of the world continues to grow.

Important for our purposes here is not whether the policies espoused by these groups are right. Most important is that they have overcome the disabilities of state-centered international education and perceived ways in

which they as individuals, and their local communities, are involved in global issues. In responding they have established remarkable local laboratories for learning about global issues and for inventing strategies through which they can act responsibly. They are responding to their growing knowledge that they personally, and their local community, are part of problems such as nuclear proliferation, Apartheid, global pollution, and the growing gap between the rich and the poor of the world. At the same time, they are illuminating for global educators examples of the kinds of knowledge people need for coping with the realities of global interdependence.

Also exceedingly important is the way in which these activities are destroying myths about the incompetence of so-called "ordinary people" to cope with global issues. There is more potential for achieving useful, and vitally needed, global education in our local communities than we have yet recognized. This point can be dramatically made by quoting a Jamaican woman with only a primary school education who works in a tin factory:

> The tin line has been down two weeks now. Mr. James (the manager) did not fill out the forms properly for to get the foreign exchange to buy the material. It come from Canada. The IMF man control the thing now, you know, so things have to be just so. And we workers suffer 'cause production shut down 'cause we need those things. And Mr. James, he a fool to play with it. We ask him where the material, and he say it's coming. We know he mess it up. Jamaica don't have the money no more. Each factory must wait a turn to get the money. I hear the tin is on the dock in Toronto, waiting to be shipped here. (A. Lynn Bolles, 1983, 155)

As a final topic for my remarks, I would like to return again to our second main theme, "educating Americans in a new global community." Earlier we assumed that this phrase means educating Americans about the facts of global interdependence today. But we could also take this phrase to mean that global education should empower people to strive for a future global community that is more fulfilling of basic human values than that in which we now live. Indeed,

empowering our students to effectively take part in this struggle would seem to be the most important rationale for global education. But here again we must overcome the tendencies in mainstream international relations research and teaching to convey the notion that the present inter-state system, based fundamentally upon inter-state struggle for power, and resulting in periodic wars, is an inevitable condition of world relations.

Anyone who reads daily headlines knows that war and the struggle for power are facts of life in the inter-state system. But, and this is a big BUT, the newspaper headlines, and TV news, do not portray a realistic overview picture of world relations. As a result, very few Americans have a realistic understanding of growing competence for global governance that began with the League of Nations, expanded with the founding of the Western-centered United Nations, and has now developed into a UN system with over 30 organizations with as many as 183 members. These organizations deal with issues of health, atomic energy, labor, education, civil aviation, telecommunications, maritime shipping, human rights, development, trade and many more. They have headquarters in some 15 cities and offices in more than a hundred cities around the world. Very significant for people struggling with global issues in our local communities are the some 90 offices in the system which carry on relations with non-governmental organizations.

Obviously these developments are not part of any grand design for world government. Rather, they reflect an almost inevitable response to the fact that most problems within states have spilled across state borders. As a result, we can say that governments of states have lost sovereignty over these problems. In order to cope, or regain sovereignty, they have to collaborate with their counterparts in other countries. Thus, all of the departments of our federal

government are now involved in UN agencies which are struggling to cope with the global dimensions of problems such as drugs, AIDs, nuclear proliferation, pollution, and global transportation and communications systems.

Regrettably, the United States government tends to have a rather detached, and often unilateral, stance toward these developments which is illuminated by failure to pay legally-binding financial assessments, withdrawal from UNESCO, casting the single negative vote in WHO against standards for marketing of infant formula, failure to ratify most human rights treaties, and lack of support for the Law of the Sea Treaty. Elliot Richardson describes this treaty as the most important achievement in international law since the UN Charter. If the United States is to become creatively engaged in employing potential of the UN system for coping with global issues, it is obvious that the American people will have to demand it. But, if they are to demand it, they must have knowledge about the UN system. I will offer you two facts that document their regrettable ignorance. Recently, the UN sponsored polls in 32 countries in order to discern public knowledge about the United Nations. The countries polled were in Europe, Africa and Latin America, and also included Australia, India and Jordan. When asked to identify the current Secretary General of the UN from a list of five names, the US ranked 31st with only 15% responding correctly; top ranked were Austria (75%) and Greece (70%). When asked to name only one United Nations agency, the US ranked 27th, with 16% able to do so. Top ranked were Jordan (72%) and Norway (62%).

These results in response to questions about very simple facts confirm impressions that I have gained of the general ignorance of the American people about the UN system through university teaching about the UN system and discussions with many citizens groups. It is vital that global educators

overcome their tendency to neglect the remarkable potential for global problem solving which has been developed during the first 50 years of the UN system. An informed citizenry might be able to prod the federal government to creatively participate in the UN system, thereby adding significantly to its potential.

Unfortunately, those struggling to "think globally and act locally" in our local communities usually share the ignorance of their fellow-citizens about the UN system. They certainly realize that humanity cannot cope with most global issues without support from the local communities of the world. But they tend not to understand the concrete ways in which global institutions are relevant to their local efforts. Or, from another perspective, they seem to understand that democratic governance is not now possible without local competence to cope with global issues which intrude into daily life. But they often have not yet identified ways in which their local efforts might be linked to those of people in other communities around the world. Robert Dahl and E.A. Tufte recognized this challenge very clearly 20 years ago:

> Rather than conceiving of democracy as located in a particular kind of inclusive, sovereign unit, we must learn to conceive of democracy spreading through a set of interrelated political systems, sometimes though not always arranged like Chinese boxes, the smaller nesting in the larger. The central theoretical problem is no longer to find suitable rules, like the majority principle, to apply within a sovereign unit, but to find suitable rules to apply among a variety of units, none of which is sovereign. (Dahl and Tufte, 1973, 135)

Thus, if educators are to empower Americans to participate in the creation of a new global community, we must enable them to perceive both local potential and global potential. Then we must encourage them to ponder how they might be creatively linked together. Sometimes this might mean local campaigns which attempt to convince our federal government that it should ratify specific human rights treaties, or return to UNESCO. At other times, it might mean directly linking with local movements in other countries, as happened with environmental

groups while preparing for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro last summer. Important here is the notion of identifying potential, so as to overcome the negativism and pessimism induced by news headlines and international relations teaching that ignores growing potential.

In conclusion, I hope that I have convinced you that teaching about world relations must begin at home. At the same time, it must begin as soon as young people begin learning about their own home, the social context of their school, their local community and their region. This will include concrete information on local business, religious, ethnic, arts and educational ties with the world. And it will include graphic examples of local groups who are working on global issues. After they know "where in the world they are," young people are ready to learn what folks are doing at the stars on the map and the significance of these things for their daily lives. This must be quickly followed by learning about how the people from 183 stars around the world gather in some 15 cities to work together on global issues, and how many citizens groups are struggling to influence the outcomes of these efforts. Finally, an effort must be made to evaluate potential ways in which creative local communities might play a role in creating "a new world community."

Of course, this will require that teachers, from kindergarten to university, add significantly to their own international relations education. Nothing will be more fundamental than for teachers to acquire the capacity to perceive world relations as they walk though the rooms of their home and school, and walk through the streets and buildings of their local community. They will also have to acquire the capacity to learn about world relations from local people in business, religious, ethnic and arts groups. At the same time they

must learn the global roots of the subjects they teach in school and learn from local people who are inventing ways to cope with global issues.

Given the growing demands on all teachers, this might seem to be a tall order. But for the most part it will not require taking new courses. Mainly required is capacity to perceive what we are already doing in our daily life with a new perspective--in our school, in the supermarket, on the street, in our religious congregation, and in the local bank. In case there are those who believe the challenge to be too taxing, we would remind them of what the Jamaican woman with only a primary school education learned about the international political economy while working on the tin line in a Jamaican factory. While on the assembly line she perceived her connections to the port in Toronto, to foreign exchange markets and to the International Monetary Fund. Global educators: Isn't this indeed encouraging?

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